

# Glaucoma can take your sight away.



**Keep Vision in Your Future.**

## Glaucoma: What You Need To Know

- Glaucoma is a group of diseases that can damage the optic nerve of the eye. Primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG) is the most common form. It often has no warning signs and, if left untreated, can result in permanent vision loss or blindness.
- Glaucoma treatments include medicines, laser surgery, conventional surgery, or a combination of any of these. While these treatments may save remaining vision, they do not improve sight already lost from glaucoma.
- More than 70 percent of Americans reported loss of eyesight as 10 on a scale of 1–10, with 10 being the worst thing that could happen to them.<sup>1</sup>
- An estimated 2.2 million Americans have been diagnosed with POAG. An additional 2 million Americans have glaucoma and don't know it.<sup>2</sup>
- Whites (95%) and African Americans (94%) reported having heard of glaucoma more often than Hispanics/Latinos (61%) and Asians (72%).<sup>1</sup>
- Of the 90 percent of the population 18 years and older who reported having heard of glaucoma, the majority of the population knew that glaucoma can cause vision loss (92%), glaucoma can be treated (86%), and that vision loss from glaucoma can be prevented (67%). However, only 8 percent reported knowing that there are no early warning signs for glaucoma.<sup>1</sup>
- It is estimated that the number of people who have glaucoma will increase 50 percent by 2020, largely because of the aging of the U.S. population.<sup>3</sup>
- People at higher risk for glaucoma should have a dilated eye examination every one to two years. People at higher risk include the following:
  - » African Americans over the age of 40
  - » Everyone over the age of 60, especially Mexican Americans
  - » People with a family history of glaucoma
- African Americans (76%) reported having their eyes examined by an eye care professional less often than Hispanics/Latinos (80%), Asians (84%), and Whites (86%).<sup>1</sup>
- More people 55 years and older (91%) than people 18 to 54 years (67%) reported having their eyes dilated, and more women (79%) than men (68%) reported having had a dilated eye exam.<sup>1</sup>

- More Whites (78%) reported receiving a dilated eye exam than Asians (73%), African Americans (66%), and Hispanics/Latinos (54%).<sup>1</sup>
- Glaucoma is three times more likely to occur in African Americans than in Whites.<sup>3</sup> It is also about four times more likely to cause blindness in African Americans than in Whites.<sup>4</sup>
- The prevalence of POAG among Hispanics/Latinos is nearly 5 percent. This rate increases with age from about 8 percent for those in their 60s to 15 percent for those in their 70s.<sup>5</sup>
- More people 18 years and older (79%) reported receiving follow-up care for glaucoma than any other eye condition or disease.<sup>1</sup>
- For glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration, men reported receiving follow-up care more often than women.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>National Eye Institute and Lions Clubs International Foundation. (2006). Knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding eye health and disease: Results of a national telephone survey. Unpublished data. Bethesda, MD: National Eye Institute.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Eye Institute. (2004). National plan for eye and vision research. Retrieved October 4, 2006, from [www.nei.nih.gov/strategicplanning/np\\_index.asp](http://www.nei.nih.gov/strategicplanning/np_index.asp)

<sup>3</sup>The Eye Disease Prevalence Research Group. (2004). Prevalence of open-angle glaucoma among adults in the United States. *Archives of Ophthalmology*, 122, 532–538.

<sup>4</sup>The Eye Disease Prevalence Research Group. (2004). Causes and prevalence of visual impairment among adults in the United States. *Archives of Ophthalmology*, 122, 477–485.

<sup>5</sup>Varma, R., Ying-Lai, M., Francis, B. A., Nguyen, B. B., Deneen, J., Wilson, M. R., et al.; Los Angeles Latino Eye Study Group. (2004). Prevalence of open-angle glaucoma and ocular hypertension in Latinos: The Los Angeles Latino Eye Study. *Ophthalmology*, 111, 1439–1448.